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## **Wagner returns to McCaw Hall with *Tristan and Isolde***

**Seattle Opera favorite Mary Elizabeth Williams  
makes role debut as Isolde**

**Fantasy-inspired Argentinian production  
highlights rich South American opera tradition**

**Plus, events at the Opera Center  
offer new insights into renowned work**

SEATTLE—Seattle Opera continues its 2022/23 season with Richard Wagner's sensual epic, ***Tristan and Isolde***. Building on the proud tradition of Wagner productions in Seattle, *Tristan and Isolde* brings Wagner to the McCaw Hall stage for the first time since 2016.

**Mary Elizabeth Williams**, a longtime Seattle Opera favorite, makes her role debut as Isolde, marking a major foray into new Wagnerian repertoire. Williams, who first sang at Seattle Opera as a Young Artist in the 2000/01 season, appeared most recently as Serena in *Porgy and Bess* ('18), where *The Seattle Times* proclaimed she had "stolen the show."

For Williams, debuting this role in Seattle has been an opportunity to reflect on her history with the company. "Seattle Opera has been so many things for me during my career: an incubator, a launching pad, a refiner," says Williams. "It is only

fitting that I would begin my Wagner journey in Seattle. I am overflowing with gratitude."

Joining Williams is world-renowned *heldentenor* **Stefan Vinke**, who made headlines at Seattle Opera as Siegfried in the 2013 *Ring* cycle. Internationally recognized Wagnerian soprano **Amber Wagner** makes her Seattle Opera debut as Brangäne, alongside **Ryan McKinny** as Kurwenal, **Morris Robinson** as King Marke, and **Viktor Antipenko** in his Seattle Opera debut as Melot. **Heidi Melton** will fill the role of Isolde in the October 23 performance. At the helm is **Jordan de Souza**, part of the "new generation" leading the international conducting scene (*The New York Times*).

The production comes to Seattle from the **Teatro Argentino de la Plata** outside Buenos Aires, Argentina. Stage director **Marcelo Lombardero** seeks to highlight the opera's internal dimensions with his production: "I opted for a visual framework inspired by the style of fantasy comic book illustrations," says Lombardero. "Utilizing projected drawings, videography, and animation, the scenic design creates an intentionally un-realistic style that combines elements from the Middle Ages, the Romantic period, and our own time. It is a style that involves the audience in the inner journey of these two unfortunate lovers through music, image, and drama."

Seattle Opera General Director **Christina Scheppelmann** hopes this production will give Seattle audiences a taste of the rich, extensive opera tradition in South America. "Some of the great opera houses of South America predate those in the United States, and that long tradition has fostered great creativity and imagination," says Scheppelmann. "This production uses a generous palette of colors and images that, in conjunction with Wagner's irresistibly powerful music, produces an intensely emotional experience."

*Tristan and Isolde* runs **October 15–29 at McCaw Hall**, with tickets starting at \$35. More information at [seattleopera.org/tristan](http://seattleopera.org/tristan). Plus, get a sneak peek with a live feed of a working rehearsal of *Tristan and Isolde*, broadcast at Seattle Opera's **Open House** on Saturday, September 24, from 1–4 PM at the Opera Center.

Rounding out the fall, the Opera Center hosts learning opportunities, recitals, and behind-the-scenes exhibits to enhance the experience of *Tristan and Isolde*:

- **Open House**

*Saturday, September 24, from 1–4 PM, The Opera Center*

*Free*

Seattle Opera welcomes the public into the Opera Center for the first time since 2019 for a free Open House. Attendees will get a sneak peek at [Tristan](#)

[and Isolde](#) with a live feed of a working rehearsal broadcast in the Opera Center. Also featured are a preview of the upcoming world premiere of [A Thousand Splendid Suns](#) with composer **Sheila Silver**, a Q&A with General Director **Christina Scheppelmann** and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* conductor **Viswa Subbaraman**, activities for students and children, a tour of the costume shop, a sing-along, and more. More info and RSVP at [seattleopera.org/openhouse](http://seattleopera.org/openhouse).

- **Amber Wagner in Recital**

*Wednesday, October 19, at 7:30 PM, Tagney Jones Hall*

Wagner veteran and Seattle Opera debut artist Amber Wagner (Brangäne, *Tristan und Isolde*) presents an intimate but soaring program with selections ranging from Wagner and Strauss to Bellini, Barber, and Gershwin. Tickets and info at [seattleopera.org/on-stage/amber-wagner-in-recital/](http://seattleopera.org/on-stage/amber-wagner-in-recital/).

- **Opera Talk: *Singing like Germans* with Kira Thurman & Naomi André**

*Thursday, October 20, at 7:00 PM, Tagney Jones Hall*

*Free*

Join us for a conversation with Kira Thurman, author of *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms*, and Seattle Opera scholar-in-residence Dr. Naomi André. Drawing on her experience as a classically trained pianist who grew up in Vienna, Austria, Thurman traces the sweeping story of Black musicians performing in Germany and Austria over more than a century. More info and RSVP at [seattleopera.org/classes-camps-clubs/for-adults/opera-talks/opera-talk-with-naomi--kira-thurman/](http://seattleopera.org/classes-camps-clubs/for-adults/opera-talks/opera-talk-with-naomi--kira-thurman/)

## **About Seattle Opera**

Established in 1963, Seattle Opera is committed to serving the people of the Pacific Northwest through music, storytelling, and programs for people of all ages. Each year, more than 80,000 people attend the company's performances, and more than 100,000 people are served through school performances, radio broadcasts, and more. The organization brings opera to life in a number of different ways, offering artistic excellence through national and international collaborations. Seattle Opera strives to create an environment where artists, staff, behind-the-scenes workers, and members of the community feel a strong connection to the company, and to the art of opera. Follow Seattle Opera on Facebook, Twitter, SoundCloud, and on 98.1 Classical KING FM.

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